NOTES ON THE G20 PROTESTS

an introduction...

In November last year people gathered in Melbourne to protest the G20, a meeting of the finance ministers from the top 20 economies of the world & the World Bank & International Monetary Fund. A group of people ('Arterial Bloc') organised to disguise themselves & work together, & more people joined them on the day. On the morning a section of the protest overturned barricades; later, splitting from the main march, they broke down barricades, confronted the cops & smashed a police van.

Since then police have arrested over 20 people for charges such as riot & affray. The special taskforce formed to track people down has released photos of 'persons of interest' to the media & raided houses looking for evidence. Ongoing solidarity with those who are facing charges is essential. We believe part of that solidarity involves defending the acts they are accused of.

Many sections of the left, including those who claimed to speak for the StopG20 protests as a whole, condemned the actions of Arterial Bloc & the others who broke the rules of protest. While we don't want to glorify the events of the G20 protests, we think there were many good things about what happened as well as things to learn. In that spirit, here is a selection of some things people have written about the G20 protests.

More reflections, as well as ongoing updates about arrests & discussions of solidarity, can be found at http://arushandapush.blogsome.com

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po box 4 / enmore / 2042 mutineers@graffiti.net

A Call to form an Arterial Bloc

for Saturday November 18,
in the G20 protests in Melbourne, Australia

This is what we want: lives worth living, lives of dignity and autonomy and we want to work together against capitalism and the state to achieve this. We want to develop collective power and collective communication. Not to follow, not to lead, but to work out how we can organise ourselves.

We believe that an effective bloc is made up of many people who have many different skills and capacities. Sometimes the most crucial skills (such as the ability to care) can get forgotten when the focus is on more "exciting" things. But we all have something to offer, and we are equals. None of us are heroes; together we can help each other to be brave, happy and rebellious.

This is what we're planning: To confront the G20 more directly: to go to the Grand Hyatt Hotel the morning of its meeting, Saturday November 18, prepared for radical disobedience. We want our disobedience and our creation of other ways of living to be effective as we can make it. We have no time for violent macho fantasy or delusions about Ghandi. Our bodies, our lives, our desires are too precious to fuck with. We want to be smart, joyful and defiant, not martyrs.

This is what we're planning: To carry, as a bloc, white overalls and bright bandanas to cover our faces and to be ready, if we decided collectively, to wear them. We encourage those that want to struggle with us as part of the Arterial Block to organise this equipment

By having the option of becoming clandestine we are refusing the rules of the game of civil protest, the containment of the 'good protester'. We are choosing not to be compliant citizens who make their wishes, and show their faces, to 'their representatives.' Rather we are relying only on our own disobedience and our co-operative power.

We are constantly subjected to the surveillance of the state and yet made invisible by the simulated reality of power, their media, their ideology, a world of things and their prices. By having the choice to become invisible, we can subvert this. They may not see our faces but we shall show our anger, our creativity and our ungovernable desires.

This is what we're planning: there are many things to discuss. We support, and hope to work alongside, other groups taking action in whatever way they see fit. We encourage those who want to be part of Arterial Bloc to plan with us:

Thursday November 16, 4pm
Friday November 17, 6pm

at: A Space Outside. (http://www.aspaceoutside.org)

"Your friends will be there when your back is to the wall.
You'll find you'll need us cause there's no one else to call.
When it was hopeless a decision is what you need." (theme to 21 Jump St)

In the Wake...
After G20

Please forgive any typos – time is of the essence.

So what happened at the G20 in Melbourne? On one hand it was business as usual. The G20 met and seemed to function as planned with both agreement and disagreement amongst the assembled representatives of the capitalist global order. Predictably, despite the boosterism of groups like Make Poverty History, the G20 did nothing to ameliorate even the most horrific consequences of capitalism. Yet something happened outside: a relatively small group of protesters produced a political event, a moment of rupture that is full of possibilities and dangers. What we do now after that event, how we trace the lines of struggle that it opened up is crucial. There are both opportunities and pitfalls ahead and the telling of the tale, the reflection on our experiences and the sharing of stories is important. Because there is not just one version of what happened: indeed part of the power and joy experiencing something like this mobilization is being part of collective moment that has many points of origins and many experiences. In the normal daily life of capitalism we have only two views: that of the machinery of public opinion, and that of the isolated individual. In moments of upsurge something different happens. Lets find a richness in and continue to enrich this difference.

But there are forces that work to close down the possibilities that have been opened by such an event. In this case they are police repression, the implementation of a simulation of the events by the media, and division and recrimination amongst those that took part. It is understandable that those that have gone beyond the law want to protect themselves, it is also understandable that the power of the media is so great that even those who took part in the actions can feel disorientated by the way their own participation is reflected back to them, and in a movement that is both small and diverse, that lacks a common language of communication, differences can often become divisions – especially when so much is on the line. This does not take away from how important it is to resist these things, to keep the space open, and try to connect it with others and other struggles.

I want to deal with two points here:

Firstly violence. It is clear that violence happened: both "sides" used force. But it is wrong to reduce all that happened to violence or to see the violence as only an aberration. It needs to be placed in perspective. From media reports the force used by protestors despite appearing "spectacular" was actual very minimal. The most intense use of force was directed at objects: the destruction of a police van, the dismantling of barricades and so on. The physical attacks on police officers, according to media reports, seem to have produced only one real injury – a broken wrist. Obviously this is unpleasant to the officer but it is not more substantial than a serious bar fight. The violence of the police, which has been largely ignored by the corporate media, was the reverse. Armed with batons and sanctioned by the state, the police violence was direct at living bodies. It is obscene to see these things as equivalents.

But also the usual rhetorical defence of the use of force by protestors as 'self-defence' cannot be applied. It is clear that some sections of the carnival did pre-emptively use force on the barriers, the police lines and the now infamous police van. Each of the actions that made up these moments of confrontation cannot be reduced to each other. Rather they have to be judged soberly and critically. Which actions were attempts to generate creative disturbances, which cemented our co-operation, and which were escalations that were counter-productive? Did sometimes the emotional euphoria of attacking the property of the state detract from subverting the social relations that made up the state? How are we going to deal with the consequences?

It is also important that the seemingly "exciting" nature of the use of force does not detract from the other actions, the other manifestations of creativity that people mobilised. If there was value in Saturday's actions (and I believe there was) it was the combination of people experimenting with co-operation, horizontal and autonomous organising and a militant attitude to the state. Whilst again each moment can not be made equivalent to the other – throwing a garbage bin is not the same as locking on to car is not the same a playing music or dressing as a clown and so on – the points of inter-relationship where rich and important. It is also crucial to remember what came before the actions. The attempts at creating moments of alternative social relations at things such as a space outside and the multitude conversations and debates that went on are just as important as any moment of confrontation. They are in many ways the way we give substance to our dreams

Secondly the Arterial Block. It is crucial to refuse either a romanticisation or demonisations of this group. At best they seemed to have been a handful of affinity groups that with a minimum of preparation and internal organising attempted a number of the more confrontational initiatives. But so too did many others. Perhaps the only really difference is that the Arterial Block had a public name that the media and police could hang on to. It would be a mistake to see any group as homogenous internally or exercising hegemony over other elements of the mobilisation. If anything the actions taken by this or that section just opened up space for others to fill. The media attempt to portray the Arterial Block as some kind of international paramilitary association is not only totally wrong and an attempt to establish the grounds for the repression of those involved, it also works to create hierarchies within the movement: a hard-core that leads others. Refuse this attempt.

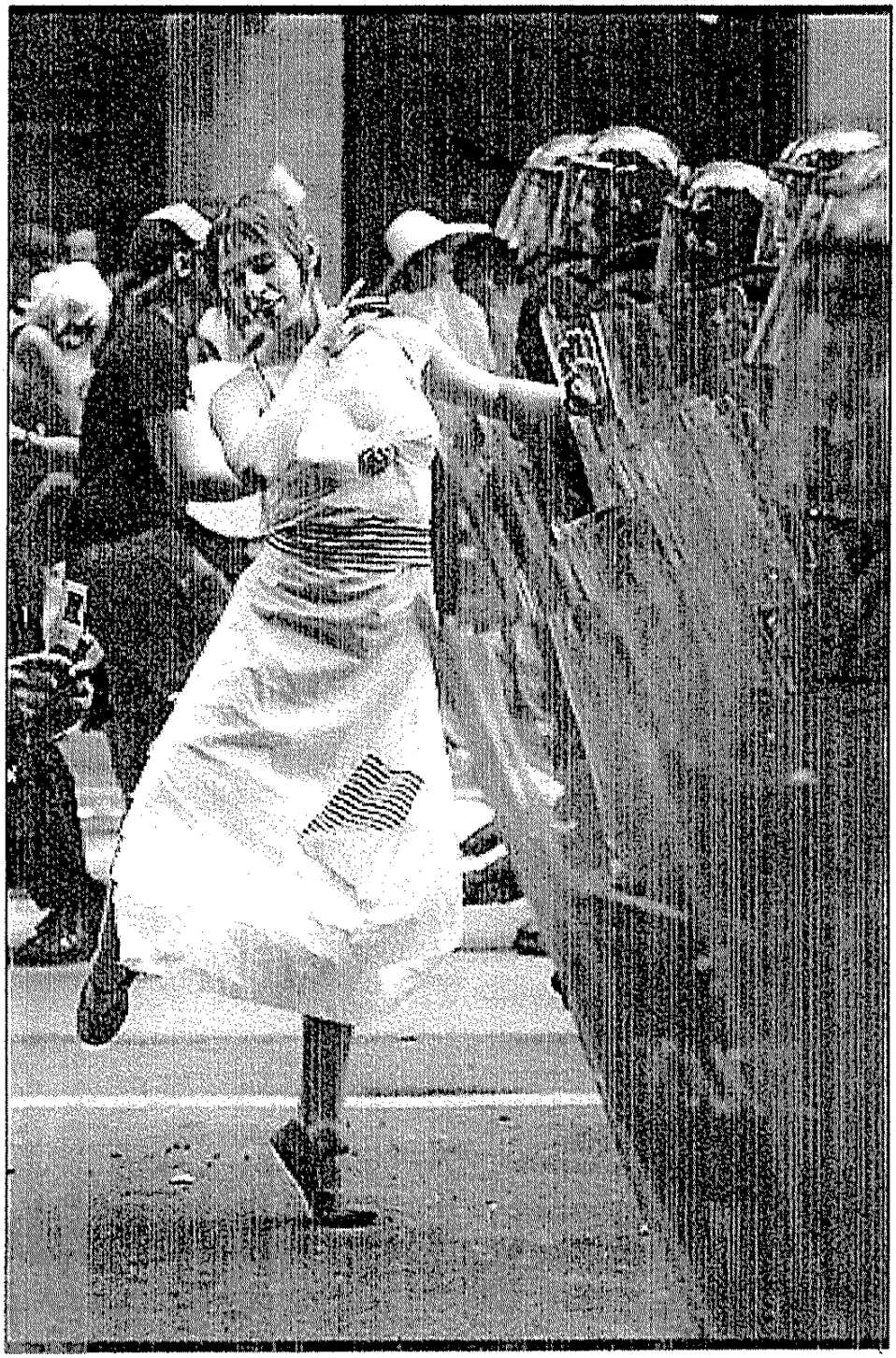
So what to do now? I think firstly care for each other. Obviously this means establishing consistent and on going solidarity with those that face charges or suffered police violence. Some very apparent tasks of support will appear over the next few weeks. Don't back down from these. But care in the more general sense is also important. Understand that sometimes after such an event we may feel a range of emotions, some good some bad and creating the space to relax and share love for each other is crucial. But more than this in the face of the state and media we should not close inwards. Rather we can make many public spaces to reflect on and debate what happened in a way that is critical but not blaming, nuanced and open minded. Also the energy, the rebellion, the determination and militancy we experienced shouldn't be thrown away. Continue to organise, in whatever forms you choose on what ever scale. The

more the daily projects of creating alternatives and resistances flow into big mobilisations and vice versa the better.

I hope to see, and I hope to see it soon, many different stories being told, many threads of experiences, of criticism, of celebration, of differences that can weave together something great. Possibilities have been opened, forces of repression are being organised. I feel if we base ourselves in a democratic, horizontal, autonomous and open praxis of resistances then perhaps we can grasp these possibilities.

With love and solidarity

Dave



A first communique from two uncitizens of Arterial Bloc

There have been many calls for Arterial Bloc to come forward and "justify" their tactics during the G20 protests. The following statement is not a justification of specific actions; it is an exploration of politics. This statement has not been written for or on behalf of the Bloc; it has been written from within the Bloc. None of us can be leaders or spokespeople for each other.

We apologise for the delay. We were not able to head straight from the streets to the internet. We have been dealing with the consequences of achieving more than perhaps we thought we would, and the aftermath of repression. We have been caring for each other, talking to each other, trying to find out what happened to those arrested and injured; remembering to breathe and sleep and eat.

The demonising of Arterial Bloc by other sections of the Left (a demonising that only seems to have escalated in the last few days) has been cowardly, hysterical and, in the deepest sense, uncomradely. A willing eagerness to blame violence on "interstate" or "foreign" agitators is both false and xenophobic. Why must the militant protestor always be an other, both geographically and philosophically distanced from us? Why should struggle respect national or state borders? There has been a belief expressed not only by the corporate media but also by the Left that such actions as occurred at the G20 could not and should not be possible here in Australia. By extension, those involved are not "genuine" protestors but false provocateurs; or, if those involved were indeed "local", their protest was immature and apolitical.

We did not come out of nowhere and we are not strangers. We do not have "contempt" for "ordinary protesters"; we are ordinary protesters. What was Arterial Bloc? It was a call-out, a costume, and an attempt at internal democracy and communication. It was joined and accompanied on the day by many people who chose, for that time, to work together. Arterial Bloc is not an organization or a party; it is not a homogenous group or a faceless, rootless mob. We are female, male and in between; workers, unemployed, students, union members. We have been on union picket lines; we have created squatted social centres; we have blockaded in forests and cities; we have cooked and distributed free meals; we have leafleted, rallied, called meetings; we have lived together and apart, and tried to love each other. We are ordinary: as scared and as alienated as everybody else. We do not have magical solutions; we have desire that will not be governed.

The fear displayed towards members of the Bloc seems grounded largely in the Bloc's tactics of masking and disguise. Most criticism of the tactic centres on the idea that "disguise" is somehow sinister; that it leaves the movement open to infiltration by police and/or fascists, and that not knowing or not recognising fellow protestors is a bad thing.

Unpacking the semiotics of disguise is complicated. What follows is an attempt to do so.

Firstly, some history. Contrary to general belief, the G20 protests are not the first time that a "disguised" Bloc has appeared at an Australian protest. Orange Bloc pursued a similar tactic at the 2003 WTO protests in Homebush and the Sydney CBD; orange boilersuits and bandanas were chosen for their visual resonance with the "war on terror" and the ensuing "state of emergency" across the globe, a state of emergency which, as Walter Benjamin once noted, is not an exception but the rule.

White overalls also have a particular historical resonance within the contemporary anti-capitalist movement, having been for many years the disguise of choice for the Tute Bianche, an autonomist group of largely Italian origin who began organising in 1994. Now is not the time or place for an extended discussion of the Tute Bianche, but a decent quote from one of their many documents (freely available on the internet) may help to illuminate the political arguments in favour of disguise:

"The white overalls are not a movement, they are a tool which was devised in the context of a broader movement (the social centers of the Charta of Milan) and made available to an even broader movement (the global one). Nowadays the white overalls exist in many countries. The white overalls are neither an institution nor a political current, nor are they to be strictly identified with Ya Basta! or the social centers of North-East Italy [...]

One of our soundbites is: "We're wearing the white overall so that other people wear it. We're wearing the white overall so that we can take it off someday".

The white overall is not a "uniform" [...] It hasn't got militaristic origins. Back in Autumn 1994 the Mayor of Milan evicted the Leoncavallo squatted centre and stated: "Squatters are nothing other than ghosts now!" His description was accepted ironically, and thousands of people dressed in white stormed the streets of the city and rioted for hour. That was the real debut of the white overalls [...]

After that debut, the imagery of the white overall was enriched by ironic references to the "blue overalls": nowadays labour has changed [...] "flexibility", part-time and precarious jobs have made exploitation less visible, there's a new "ghostly" working class."

A white overall or similar disguise is a refusal to claim a space of "citizenship", as the original Arterial Bloc call out (widely distributed) makes clear. Contemporary capitalism makes ghosts of us all, because it leeches us of our own precious and unique desires – and the embodiment of those desires – in favour of a homogenous "discipline" and "order". We cease to be human beings; we are mere machinery and leftovers. For those of us who are ostensibly "free" there is the discipline of the workplace; of welfare, police and state surveillance (one must be the "grateful" and "well behaved" poor or be nothing); of educational institutions; and not least the discipline of the average protest. For those who face the brunt of state repression, there is the detention centre, the jail, the ghost prison of an unknown country. These forms of repression and enclosure are all connected: in solidarity with those who are refused citizenship and freedom of movement we also refuse citizenship; as a rebuttal to the fact that we are targeted and profiled on an everyday basis for visible difference – ethnicity, poverty and class, gender

and sexuality – we choose to disguise that visibility. We will not "stand up and be counted" as citizens within this false democracy. Capitalism haunts us, and it makes us haunted; we will haunt it.

Socialist Alternative (among others) has claimed that the tactic of disguise "can only be justified in situations of extreme state repression", and that until such time, we must continue to be "ordinary". The basic fact is that over the past five years, the "war on terror" has been used as the overarching excuse for extreme state repression, both in Australia and elsewhere. "Ordinary" people have been raided, beaten, locked up, charged with crimes that they never committed; it is time for us to stop claiming the space of "ordinary" and "innocent" as a space of safety. If those of us who attend rallies and public protests are only doing so "on behalf" of those who have been denied the presumption of innocence, what power and privileges are we thereby claiming for ourselves? If we as protestors are always "innocent", who is "guilty": rioters in Redfern, Iraqi insurgents, Guantanamo prisoners, Tongan youth?

Capitalism does not tolerate serious, revolutionary dissent; it never has and it never will. The state will do everything in its power to crush revolutionary movements, and it will not care to distinguish between the "innocent" and the "guilty", between the "good" and the "bad" protestor. Are we revolutionaries, or not? If we are, then we are already enemies of the state. Let us not be afraid of being called so.

"The same people who are murdered slowly in the mechanized slaughterhouses of work are also arguing, singing, drinking, dancing, making love, holding the streets, picking up weapons and inventing a new poetry." (Raoul Vaneigem)

We reclaim the radical ordinary. We do not feel the need to pitch a "central message" through the filter of the corporate media to the mythical "ordinary person" who, apparently, can only comprehend or sympathise with managed dissent.

A false dichotomy is set up between the role of the "disciplined", politically mature protestor and the inarticulate other. The other is positioned as a person or a group too worn out by oppression to resist tactically. This other is protested for, or on behalf of, but we must never indulge in their tactics. Both property damage and any spontaneous, emotional embodiment of resistance are seen as apolitical, as reactions to be left (pun intended) behind as we attain proper political maturity. "Oppressed others" (in Redfern, Macquarie Fields, Palm Island, Lakemba) who are perhaps never expected by those who call for disciplined protest to reach the requisite levels of political maturity have been rhetorically defended for their "justified" anger. But those who set Macquarie Fields on fire are never presumed to be part of a mass resistance to capitalism; and those who are presumed to be a part of "the movement" are therefore seen as outside of the system that produces such anger.

Property damage can be tactical, and as a tactic it has a long history. As peasant saboteurs and early industrial workers made clear, property damage was a direct disruption of capitalism's machinery, and of its discipline of lives and bodies in the workplace:

"I am not going to attempt to justify sabotage on any moral ground. If the workers consider

that sabotage is necessary, that in itself makes sabotage moral. Its necessity is its excuse for existence. And for us to discuss the morality of sabotage would be as absurd as to discuss the morality of the strike or the morality of the class struggle itself. In order to understand sabotage or to accept it at all it is necessary to accept the concept of class struggle. If you believe that between the workers on the one side and their employers on the other there is peace, there is harmony such as exists between brothers, and that consequently whatever strikes and lockouts occur are simply family squabbles; if you believe that a point can be reached whereby the employer can get enough and the worker can get enough, a point of amicable adjustment of industrial warfare and economic distribution, then there is no justification and no explanation of sabotage intelligible to you."

(Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Sabotage, Cleveland, Ohio, 1916)

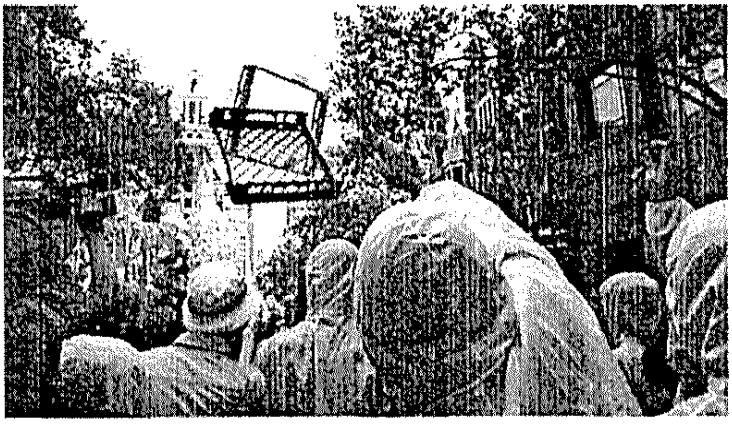
Almost 100 years later, sabotage and property damage can still be used to disrupt the efficient functioning and discipline of capitalism, not only in the workplace, but in each area of our lives where this discipline has reach, which is to say, all of our lives, every day. The machinery or war and of the militarisation of public space and the containment of protest within sanctioned zones – all these things need to be dismantled. When barricades are destroyed, streets are opened.

Beyond tactics and planning is the exhilaration of embodying refusal – even if only for a moment, and these moments are not without politics. Why should politics and protest be disciplined spaces, spaces without emotion and desire? To be caught up in the moment, in a collective energy, is a rare rupture of the alienation, isolation and powerlessness of our everyday lives. These moments show us what we are capable of; but we are capable of much more. We must preserve a movement of resistance to capitalism that is made up of many different acts of refusal and creation. However, we genuinely fail to understand how anyone who calls herself a revolutionary can fail to find at least some beauty in the sight of a smashed police van.

We can and will discuss tactics and their consequences; a more detailed response to specific events during the G20 protests is being prepared.

With love and solidarity,

From two people who will be known as Gertrude and Fuchsia.



Taking Stock

I wasn't expecting much from G20.

Before I left Sydney I sat down with myself and discussed the futility of summit protests. I admitted to myself that I felt ineffectual and embarrassed. I knew our numbers would be small and I wondered what we could possibly do that would mean anything; that would affect anything.

What I really wanted was to be able to blockade the summit and I knew that wasn't going to happen. I couldn't bear the idea of another "Carnival Against Capitalism". Another lame spectacle offered as some kind of consolation prize for not being able to do anything else.

...I don't entirely mean this. I am fully aware of the beauty of creating alternatives to those structures and processes we seek to depose. I think street parties are wonderful. "Really free markets" are lovely. But it wasn't how I wanted to protest the first Australian meeting of the top 20 world economic powers.

Fundamentally, I wanted to disrupt it. I wanted active opposition. I wanted to tear down fences (as much as a symbolic act as a tactical manoeuvre). I wanted to tear down the fences, storm the police lines and swarm through the conference. I wanted the suffering of so many people throughout the world, the iniquity, to mean something. I wanted it to matter. I wanted it to drive us to be strong.

Despite all of these desires, I wasn't expecting much.

And when the Spokes on the Saturday morning began to speak of abandoning the Hyatt altogether in favour of fast food outlets, my expectations grew even dimmer. In the face of so many police, when we were so few, it seemed to me that people were feeling scared and powerless. More concerned than confrontational.

In the face of this, the morning actions turned out to be fantastically useful. In the overturning of fences and barricades there was a palpable sense of jubilance and empowerment. With small numbers and well-working communication, we felt we had achieved something.

And it was fun.

I don't think it could be said to have been strategic in any sense – we upturned barricades only to then put them back in place as we made our way around the Hyatt, convincing ourselves and each other as we went of the strategic value of what we were doing. Retrospectively, what it did was to function as a kind of a practice run; an exploration of our powers as a bloc of 80 people in costumes. What it did was to strengthen us as a bloc, giving us practice

at making decisions on the fly, even if those decisions were then disregarded in the face of opportunity. It showed us the strength of our mobility. It made us excited and confident for the afternoon activities.

And it was really fun.

But it also felt like we were a gang of adolescent puppies, exploring our strength; testing boundaries.

And it turned out those boundaries were surprisingly lax.

Which is, I think, what enabled so much of what happened in the afternoon to take place.

A strange confluence of initial police passivity and a willingness of people to engage in actively disruption that led to a series of events that have been variously demonised and valorised - events that can be summed up by the throwing of garbage bins at cops; the dismantling of a barricade system; and the smashing of police van windows/creen.

I feel that at once a lot happened that afternoon, and not much at all.

Whilst people were active in their refusal to co-operate with police guidelines for good protesters, we also posed no serious challenge to the G20 itself. We stripped away barricades, but made no real attempt to push past police lines. We smashed some police van windows, but didn't then use that alley to gain entry to the Hyatt.

Which, in a way, seems reasonable – fundamentally, there weren't many of us. But also seems like a hugely wasted opportunity. I have some sympathy (only some) for the "mindless violence" slander being bandied about, because I feel like we didn't use our violence strategically. We were (mostly) clever in disguising ourselves; we were often clever in avoiding getting smashed by police; we were not clever in choosing tactics that would benefit our greater desires for the protest, nor in fully utilising those tactics we chose. Perhaps I am being supremely egocentric and projecting the content of my desires on to others, but I tend to believe that almost everyone who took part in that afternoon, regardless of what street or barricade they were on, would have liked to have breached the Hyatt boundaries.

A quote from Woomera 2002 echoes through my mind:

"We were not fucking hopeful enough" (possibly paraphrased).

Having said that, I think the smashing of the police van was potentially the single most strategically sound move of the afternoon. Whether it was intentionally strategic or not (I can't possibly presume the motivations of those involved), the disabling of equipment used to arrest protesters is something I would love to see more of.

Partly responsible for this general strategic failure was the fact that we didn't have enough communication before the protest. Arterial Bloc meetings were rushed with so many people and so much to get through. We didn't forge a strategy; discuss tactics beyond covering up; we didn't even talk about what each of us deeply wanted from the protest. So much of what can be achieved can't be known before the day, the minute, the second in which the opportunity becomes present, or is denied. But it can be envisaged; spectrums of possibilities can be thought out, with even wildest dreams accounted for, and a sense can be gained of how much support there is within a group for seizing particular opportunities.

But there's never enough communication before a protest. Only the most dedicated and masochistic will turn up to, and sit through, endless meetings. Are we to be content, then, with our level of disorganisation, knowing that we are missing opportunities, whilst potentially grasping others that arise exactly from the disorganisation we engender?

I do think, however, that we communicated adequately with Stop G20 organisers, if not openly, then certainly in good faith about our plans. Of course, given that we hadn't planned much ourselves, this didn't amount to much in terms of content, but our intentions were made undeniably clear to them – or so we thought (it's amazing what can be denied after the fact). They were told we were going to be "confrontational" (even though we ourselves didn't yet know what that would entail); they were also told that we would make every effort to respect their protest and their desires for a "safe space" for that protest; and they were told that the way in which we would do that would be to choose a different time and/or location to the space they were to occupy. They were also told about our concerns that division would erupt as a result of the media dichotomising us into "good" and "bad" protesters, and that we were worried that media liaison people might also fall into this trap.

But it was ok, because they assured us that this would never happen.

From Dear Oblivion

Breaking the law with a commitment to getting away with it: after the G20

taken from http://melbourne.indymedia.org/news/2007/02/140171_comment.php#140202

Reflections on anti-G20 actions and their aftermath by someone who maybe threw a rubbish bin and possibly shoved a cop or two, and who wishes to remain anonymous for reasons I hope are obvious

Ever since a bunch of us threw some things, plastic rubbish bins mainly, and broke the windo of a police van, and had a bit of push'n'shove with the cops, everyone has gone crazyworld. All of these respectable anti-globalisation people said we were bad, as did a few socialist groups and of course the police and politicians. The media have printed images of us to help the cops track us down, police have raided our homes and seized our property and charged us with riot and affray and such, people have even spent time in remand with sometimes substantial delays in getting bail. We have been marginalised by most and condemned by many, even by Community Legal Service lawyers and others who presume to adjudicate the legitimacy of our actions.

I hadn't really paid that much attention since the actual events – I was sick for a few weeks afterward – and now it is like I've woken up and the world has gone nuts. I read the Arterial Bloc statement before I turned up at the G20 thing. Those Arterial Bloc people were talking pretty radical before the G20 and during, and now people are being hunted down all the 'defence' stuff seems like people are terrified and yapping apologetic nonsense. Because people are mad at them. For throwing a bin!

Where is your sense of proportion? The G20 are mass murderers, and now we're being hunted down. Hunted down! For throwing a bin!

I know Arterial Bloc doesn't equal those who took action or those charged. And I wasn't in Arterial Bloc and I haven't been arrested and my photo is not on display on wanted posters decorating newspapers and media websites, so I guess so far I've got away with it. Unlike the thirty odd people charged by now, I suppose. This could change, but so far I've avoided their attentions. I don't speak for anyone except myself, of course.

But really, people charged now have lawyers who seem to have already said all over the place that they condemn everything that Arterial Bloc types and other radicals said they were about. Lawyers who made these statements not just as general principles but specifically in relation to the anti-G20 events.

And if I get arrested, I really think the odds of doing time are pretty small, even if I did throw a bin.

The hysteria of our critics all over the spectrum was revolting but not all that surprising – but I guess it provided the soundtrack for the police taking repression a bit further than had previously been experienced by some of the kind of people at the protests. Some of whom were, not to put too fine a point on it, white and middle class and not notable amongst the

participants at Palm Island or Redfern. (All but the 'middle class' bit is true of me too, of course.)

We – whoever 'we' is - need to resist this repression for so many reasons. So we can do similar things in the future being one. So it is accepted that antagonistic people acting together can have the social weight to prevent some exacting enforcement of law. Because we should be able to attack the G20, and what the hell the police too.

Because the G20 is a club of governments who are mass murderers many times over. Because these governments and the capitalist system they further are one face of the status quo, and the status quo, the state of affairs that is this world, doesn't require some extra reason to justify disobedience, some new 'crime' to make legitimate an active contempt, a destructive criticism.

Because in the world these people defend and recreate all the time, every day has its holocaust. Because they seek to control us and when people don't want to be controlled by them this is fine, to be encouraged. Because their efforts to control us should inspire our hatred.

If you want reasons why not: Because Australia has been at the cutting edge of creating new types of concentration camp. Because Australia helped to enforce the 'sanctions' on Iraq in the nineties which killed over a million people and now pretends the hatred of Iraqis for the military might of their saviours is shocking. Because Australia keeps throwing its weight around 'the region', Because 'our rights at work' are not something I want to be told is 'worth voting for'.

Because everyday life in Australia for people who aren't rich is getting worse not better and I expect this trend to continue. Because the police are the violent defenders of the local version of our collective global hell, the army policing our lives as occupied territory.

For all these reasons and many more, I reserve the right to not be polite, to not obey, to use what is but a tiny fragment of the force and violence used by those within the G20 every day.

And really, compared to the more powerful psychopaths condemning our barbarity, what have we done? I threw a rubbish bin, maybe. I shoved a cop, possibly. Someone damaged a police car, it seems. In most countries this would rightly be regarded as trivial. In any rational society it might be seen in its actual context: the never-ending horror show that is our world.

I'm not sure what is the appropriate response to this horror show, but it sure isn't giving money to Make Poverty History, voting for the ALP or Greens, beaming positive energy into the G20, praying to the sky god, trying to 'get our message across' over the corporate media through 'non-violent protest', signing a petition or sending an angry e-mail to my local member. And more to the point, if anyone doesn't want to or can't obey anymore the horrible rules that are supposed to make up our lives, and make up the limits of what we do, and what the hell throws a rubbish bin or two, damages some cop property, damages some cop whose very existence is a provocation, I for one am not going to spend my time tut-tutting their naughtiness.

They are mass murderers, they maintain their positions with exploitation and oppression. We threw bins at their violent stooges.

Loophole Library

In November last year people gathered in Melbourne to protest the G20, a meeting of the finance ministers from the top 20 economies of the world & the World Bank & International Monetary Fund. A group of people ('Arterial Bloc') organised to disguise themselves & work together, & more people joined them on the day. On the morning a section of the protest overturned barricades; later, splitting from the main march, they broke down barricades, confronted the cops & smashed a police van.

Since then police have arrested over 20 people for charges such as riot & affray. The special taskforce formed to track people down has released photos of 'persons of interest' to the media & raided houses looking for evidence. Ongoing solidarity with those who are facing charges is essential. We believe part of that solidarity involves defending the acts they are accused of.

Many sections of the left, including those who claimed to speak for the StopG20 protests as a whole, condemned the actions of Arterial Bloc & the others who broke the rules of protest. While we don't want to glorify the events of the G20 protests, we think there were many good things about what happened as well as things to learn. In that spirit, here is a selection of some things people have written about the G20 protests.

More reflections, as well as ongoing updates about arrests & discussions of solidarity, can be found at
http://arushandapush.blogsome.com